

CLAIMS:-

1. A method of identifying a computer connected on-line to a remotely located site, comprising the steps of:
searching a hard disk associated with the computer for an identifying element inherent to the computer;
combining such an identifying element, when found, together with other identifying information associated with the hardware of the computer, to form a unique identifier for that computer;
comparing the unique identifier for the computer to a store of such unique identifiers available to the remote site;
if the unique identifier is present in the store, accessing data which is available to the remote site and which is associated with that unique identifier, the data relating, at least partially, to a credit record of previous transactions effected from that computer, and
if the unique identifier is not present in the store, then storing it in the store, and recording against it data associated with that computer.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1 in which the data associated to that computer, and against which the unique identifier is recorded, relates to further data associated with such previous transactions, such as credit card details used during such previous transactions.
3. A method as claimed in either one of claims 1 or 2 in which the identifying element that is searched for on the hard disk is a predetermined number.

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4. A method as claimed in claim 3 in which the predetermined number is a serial number of the hard disk or another such number which is unique to the hardware of the computer.
5. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the other identifying information is information that is associated with the geometry of the hard disk.
6. A method as claimed in claim 5 in which the information associated with the geometry of the hard disk includes the number of sectors, platters and cylinders in the disk.
7. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the combining function is performed on the computer.
8. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the unique identifier is sent to the remote site, from where it is compared to the store.
9. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the combining function is an encryption process.
10. A method as claimed in claim 11 in which the encryption process is a 'hash - type' encryption.
11. A system for identifying a computer connected on-line to a remotely located site, comprising:
searching means for searching a hard disk associated with the computer for an identifying element inherent to the computer;
combining means for combining such an identifying element, when

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found, together with other identifying information associated with the hardware of the computer, to form a unique identifier for that computer, a database of unique identifiers for computers, the database being available to the remote site and having data associated with each such unique identifier, the data relating, at least partially, to a credit record of previous transactions effected from that computer, and comparator and operator means for matching the unique identifier with one in the database of such unique identifiers and with the data which is associated with a matched unique identifier, and for storing an unmatched unique identifier in the database and recording against it data associated with that computer.

12. A system as claimed in claim 11 in which the data associated to that computer, and against which the unique identifier is recorded, relates to further data associated with such previous transactions, such as credit card details used during such previous transactions.
13. A system as claimed in either one of claims 11 or 12 in which the searching means is arranged to establish a predetermined type of number such as the serial number of the hard disk of the computer as the identifying element.
14. A system as claimed in either one of claims 11 or 12 in which the searching means is arranged to establish a mark or number which is inherently particular to hardware connected to the computer, as the identifying element.
15. A system as claimed in any one of claims 11 to 14 in which the searching means is arranged to establish the other identifying

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information that is associated with the geometry of the hard disk of the computer.

16. A system as claimed in claim 15 in which the geometry of the hard disk includes the number of sectors, platters and cylinders in the hard disk.
17. A method of identifying a computer connected on-line to a remotely located site, substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.
18. A system for identifying a computer connected on-line to a remotely located site, substantially as herein described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.